

The **Commonweal**

April 6, 1951

BERLIN REFUGEES

Journeys Out of Fear

CHARLES R. JOY

A SECOND NOMADELPHIA

Christians And/Or Bourgeois?

GUNNAR D. KUMLIEN

From Main Street to the World So Wide

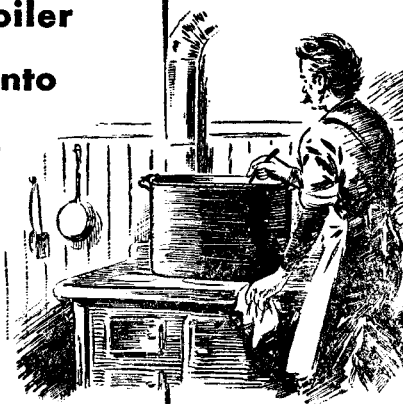
SERGE HUGHES

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**The Washboiler
that Grew Into
the World's
Leading
Church
Candle
Factory...**



NINETY-SIX YEARS AGO, young Anton Will and his wife, Rosina, put some beeswax, some candlemaking knowledge and a lot of hope into a washboiler on the kitchen stove. That, in a 10 by 10 kitchen, on a modest side street of Syracuse, N. Y., was the start of the world's leading church-candle factory.

Patiently, Anton and Rosina dipped braided cotton wicks into the melted wax; drew them out to harden, and dipped them over and over again. When the wicks were coated to proper size, they rolled the wax into graceful candles. Candles of pure beeswax. Catholic churches bought them eagerly. Anton and Rosina became the pioneer church candlemakers in America.

Debt, Death and a Widow's Might

Came the day when reputation of the small concern reached New York City. A large buyer there sent an order for a thousand pounds of candles. Anton didn't have all the money to buy that much beeswax. A Syracuse friend came to the rescue and lent him the money.

Then Anton died. Rosina alone, with three small boys to support, carried on. Before long, the boys were busy dipping wicks. And today two of the sons of those boys are officers in the company which ships beeswax products by the millions . . . imports crude beeswax from all continents.

All crude beeswax is tested first by the laboratory . . . graded for various uses, refined, purified and bleached snow-white under the sun. Only the finest, whitest and purest of the refined bleached beeswax is used for the church candles that gave the company its start and its reputation.



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The Commonweal

WEEK BY WEEK

Friendship for the Russians

DOUBTS no longer exist in America as to the character of the present Moscow regime. It is in theory and in fact bent on the subjugation of the world. It places no worth on the individual human person and it will resort to any means. Today the Kremlin is subjecting millions of Russian and other men and women to slave labor of the most inhuman sort. Since its ambitions are boundless and its neighbors are insufficiently armed, our first task is to build up the defenses of all threatened nations. Self-defense perforce comes first.

It is not, however, the whole answer to a threat which will persist as long as the present masters direct things from the Kremlin. Along with building up our own strength we should be doing everything possible to divide that hated regime from its unwilling people.

With this in mind the United States should make the most of every occasion in the UN to press for things which would be possible if only Russia were a genuinely cooperating member of the family of nations: limitation and control of A-bombs and other armaments by a representative international agency, freedom of travel and communication, a Point IV program that is worldwide, abolition of forced or slave labor, etc. We can hardly enunciate too emphatically or too frequently the decent living standards and personal freedoms we desire for all peoples in the world.

Proposals embodying such objectives must continually be put forward at the UN general sessions and its separate committees, even though the hope of Russian adherence is nil. That is one way of getting such ideas to the enslaved Russian people. To convince ourselves and friendly nations of the primacy which we accord to these ideals is a prerequisite to reaching the Russian peoples themselves with such a message.

Passing a resolution of friendship with the Russian people in both houses of Congress, as Senator Brien McMahon has suggested, would also make an impact, particularly if that resolution deplores the lack of communication between our respective peoples and reiterates our willingness to compose governmental differences on honorable terms. And naturally we must not be niggardly with Voice of America programs that are beamed to Russia and the satellites.

Yet if all of these gestures are couched in enlightened rather than provincial terms and get through to a good portion of the Soviet peoples, it will be of little avail without the power of example. Such is the opinion of George F. Kennan in the April issue of *Foreign Affairs*. According to this view we must convince by deeds as well as words, by character as well as by sentiments.

What example can we give that will convince the hard-pressed Russian people? That is a tall order. The character of the individual American home would be at the base of it. One thing that would most persuade would be the development of our economy and political and social set-up away from our reputed laissez-faire capitalism. Regulation and subordination of the profit motive, increasing co-determination in American industry, more extensive social security, encouragement of cooperatives and community ventures would supply one aspect. Another would be a more rapid elimination of national, racial and religious discriminations.

In the international sphere there are such elements as meeting urgent needs of peoples by exporting more goods and credits and techniques, reducing American tariffs to encourage reciprocal trade, welcoming larger numbers of refugees and immigrants from areas suffering from population pressure. And despite colonial and other commitments of our allies, the United States must ever take the lead as champion of political and individual freedom.

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THIS is a big prescription and one which comes close to demanding of us as individuals and as a nation the lineaments of heroic virtue. But there is no other way. What we are determines what we do. Proficiency with armament is insufficient for meeting a powerful adversary that is also an embodiment of an idea, a focus for the social protests of the universe. War or no war America must embody considerably more than it did during the first half of the twentieth century if we (and peace and justice) are to prevail.

Televising Congress?

TECHNICAL obstacles, considerable as they are, provide less difficulty than those which are political, in setting up a nationwide telecast of the proceedings of Congress. Technically it would largely be a matter of delays. Long periods would be required for establishing the necessary channels and considering all applications for facilities. And then, if the recent proposals of the Federal Communications Committee about the new ultra-high band are carried out, all present TV sets would have to be re-equipped or supplanted. But such matters could be worked out in the course of time, even with current shortages of critical materials.

On the political side the prospect is considerably more muddled. The box-office success of the crime hearings in New York has gone to many heads. Men in the industry and newspaper editors appear unable to get over the fact that dishes piled up in the sink and stores remained deserted while housewives concentrated on the hearings of a Senate committee. Such interest

in anything connected with government is unprecedented. The next step would be to put the nation's legislative activities on view continually for every citizen who has access to a television set. Here at last, its advocates assert, is truly responsible government.

When Washington provides, day after day, far less lurid fare than the Kefauver hearings, the housewife will undoubtedly go back to her dishes, canasta and pulp fiction—or whatever her task may be. Interest will tend to be of a spasmodic sort, coming in strong when local issues or major policy debates are within reach of the dials.

Even this would have certain democratic advantages. Yet television puts an excessive premium on personal attributes that have no necessary connection with good statesmanship. Moreover, would the fact that they are going to be on the air attract or repel the most useful voluntary witnesses at committee hearings? And what about the problem of sponsorship? There would seem to be many buyers of television time whose products hardly seem appropriate for sponsoring sessions-of-Congress programs; with others this tie-up with the Government would bestow unhappy competitive advantages. If remarks to one's colleagues (and to a small visitors' gallery) become an address to the nation from television screens, sessions of House and Senate would take on a radically new complexion.

The Price of Inaction

INDIA is thousands of miles away. Its masses are chronically poverty-stricken. The peoples of the East have ever been subject to drought, flood and famine. That is one way some balance is maintained between powers of sustenance and population. Besides India's threatened famine is largely due to her own chauvinism, from failure to purchase surplus grain from Moslem Pakistan. And why should India be deserving of special American consideration? Have not Mr. Nehru, Sir Benegal Rau and others opposed this country's proposals about North Korea and Communist China when the chips were down in the UN? Too many other items deserve precedence at a time when we are girding strenuously for our own self-defense.

Some such sentiments are believed to account for the failure of Congress to take action on Mr. Truman's formal request for surplus grain for India of over six weeks ago. Meanwhile Indian

• NEXT WEEK •

ED WILLOCK writes about an American industrial designer and "the exterior life."

"It strikes me that a false prophet in this generation would give the people what they wanted. He would be a man with senses so attuned to homo-consumer's every hunger pang that all his symbols would be fraught with attractive insignificance. . . . He would be at home in this world. Above all, he would be a very likable guy."

conditions have grown considerably worse. Pakistan no longer has an exportable grain surplus. Continued drought in Bihar has meant the failure of the winter crop and some forty millions there are in immediate peril. Will this in itself have any appreciable effect on men who subscribe to the sentiments outlined above—to those who would make a sharp distinction between “playing Santa Claus” and carrying on what they hold to be the only proper function of a government, the pursuance of a policy of strictly national interest, come what may?

But in the interim other things have also been taking place. Communist China has agreed to ship in 50,000 tons of rice and more than a quarter of it has already arrived, although negotiations with China were instituted some time after American negotiations were begun on the same subject. Soviet Russia likewise has offered a barter arrangement of 50,000 tons of wheat—an agreement similar, it is true, to what was effected between the two nations last year. But no American grain, aside from that procured here by straight purchase, is en route or even in prospect at this most critical hour.

Perhaps the moment has arrived to reconsider. Leave the humanitarian argument out of it, put it all on cold-war terms. Think of our potential support in India and throughout all non-Communist Asia. How will that be affected by our refusal to avert a major famine by shipping some of our grain surpluses at the very time both Communist China and Soviet Russia are sending in grain (if in far from adequate amounts)? That puts a different complexion on the matter.

When Congress reconvenes after its Easter recess, it should consider the editorial reaction of an Indian weekly newspaper, the *Naya Sabera* of Lucknow, on continued American inaction and the first grain shipments from Communist China: It is “quite clear who has genuine concern for the welfare of the Indian people.” There is only one possible answer to that.

Everybody's Business

SIX months ago the Census Bureau asked for a show of hands from all civilian government workers throughout the country, including municipal, state and federal employees, and, according to figures just released, it found their number to be 6,402,000, a postwar record. This means that one out of every twenty-four people in the country is on a government payroll, or,

figuring it in terms of the sixty million jobholders in the US, one worker out of every ten devotes his time to keeping the machinery of state oiled and grinding.

You needn't, then, send out a search party to find the nearest public servant in your vicinity and so it is hardly any wonder that when the Kefauver Committee busied itself showing up the connections between racketeers and government, a lot of people stopped, looked and listened. Government is fast becoming everybody's business.

That, of course, is as it should be. But to ask six million people to devote themselves to a career in government when the morale and self-respect of government service are less than inspiring, is to ask too much. There is, really, no way to legislate the morale of good government, any more than there is a way to legislate virtue. The inquisitors and their investigations certainly serve their purpose, but in the end this appears to be a case of getting the government we deserve.

Futile and Foolish

IT IS QUITE apparent that General MacArthur, who continues to display an astonishing talent for imposing his politics on his superiors without so much as consulting them, still entertains the idea of carrying the war to China, if that is necessary to win Korea, even though this idea has been rejected by the great majority of his superiors as the futile and foolish thing it is.

Basically this policy disagreement is not military. Almost everyone agrees that China has to be hit if we are to win all of Korea. The disagreement arises from two different views on what is to be done about the revolution in Asia: MacArthur's approach seems to mean that the revolution must be stopped even if millions of Chinese have to be bombed to their knees in the process. This, we believe, is a sure way to world war. The policy of falling back to a defense perimeter and building up Point IV in Asia after we have discharged our obligation in Korea is the better part of wisdom and it is fortunate that as yet MacArthur has not been able to destroy that policy.

At a time when one false move by MacArthur could send the world to catastrophe, there is serious cause to hope that the General will find it his pleasure to retire before this disagreement with his superiors goes that far.

Sometimes They Sang Hymns

THESE two girls on the bus were talking about the Larry Parks case. "Imagine, such a nice guy I thought he was! Why, I couldn't even stand Al Jolson before that picture with Larry Parks. Then when I used to hear him on the radio after that, I couldn't get it out of my head that it was *really* Larry, not Al. I even got to like Al Jolson that way—you know, thinking all the time that it was Larry Parks."

And the other one said it was almost the same with her, only more so because she never listened to the radio and for her Al Jolson *was* Larry Parks; it was like being crazy about two people who were the same person and that made it double, sort of. "I cried when Al Jolson died because, you know, it was like they were burying Larry Parks."

Both the girls asked again who would think such a nice guy could be a Commie (they had the tabloid vocabulary) and one of them said, "Now you take Frank Costello. He *looks* like a gangster. When a guy looks like that, well, you expect to hear things about him. But Larry Parks a Red!" Her friend said, "Well, he isn't any more." But that hardly cushioned the shock. "Yet he *was* one! That's what I can't get over."

★

THERE were the Communists, most of them university students, who picketed the Republic Steel plant during the big strike of 1937. They were young, idealistic, romantic. We were too.

They knew we were Catholics, and they resented us. Our presence cast some doubt on one of their favorite theses. "What about the Coughlinites?" they'd ask. "And what about the priest in the Polish parish who told everybody not to join the union? And what about Franco? Is that what you want in this country, another Franco?" It was the era of the outstretched hand, but still they'd ask these questions and almost dare us to answer. Then someone would sing the first line of "Solidarity Forever."

When a few priests—it was a couple years before bishops began to speak at CIO conventions—came out from the diocesan seminaries and talked to the strikers, quoting the encyclicals and saying that the Church supported the unionization of workers, they were cheered. Even the Communists were polite. But after the priests were gone, they would begin to talk about the higher and lower clergy and keep on asking what about Franco.

When the strikers sang "Solidarity Forever," led by one of these intense young Reds, you knew it was a fighting call to arms, not a hymn. For a Catholic, that was disturbing. Later, after the ten pickets were shot down by the police, the Communists would put a one-eyed man on the platform at all united-front meetings in the Chicago area. He would tell how he lost his eye during the Steel Strike massacre, then everyone would applaud when he finished and they would take up a collection—for the Loyalists, the Tom Mooney fund, or something.

In those days the Communists were out in the open—as they are now in France and Italy—and many of them were young, handsome, pretty, really beautiful, muscular, well-built, well-stacked, ingratiating, charming, attractive, appealing, full of energy and vitality. Some of them could have been movie stars. They had what movie fans look for.

These were the young Communists. The young Catholics would appear on the street May Day, to hand out copies of the *Catholic Worker* or *Wisdom* (depending on the viewpoint of their teachers) and then you would see that the young Catholics far outnumbered the young Communists. But between May Days the young Catholic students weren't heard from. They weren't around the union meetings or the strike headquarters. You might even forget about them unless you read in the paper about some meeting they held and what resolutions they passed.

Around these same years, still in Chicago, I spent a spring and summer in the heart of the Negro district. There were the young Communists again. Every Saturday afternoon was May Day in that neighborhood. The parades weren't very big and it was all over in an hour and a half or so, but you could always get a small crowd together if you made a few signs protesting the imprisonment of the Scottsboro boys.

Anything might be sung during these neighborhood parades, even jazzed-up versions of the old spirituals (spirituals were welcomed not as hymns but as a native cultural contribution of the Negroes; the young Communists were effusively admiring). But "Solidarity Forever" was sure to be among the songs. The neighborhood people, even those who only stood along the sidewalk, would sing it, led by a young Communist.

At their meetings the young Catholics would argue that after all with the Mystical Body and everything, Negroes should not be excluded from Catholic schools, and they would stand to sing "Come Holy Ghost," maybe. But in that neighborhood you never saw Catholic students, except the colored high-school kids who were taught by white nuns and sometimes went to the Holy Name meetings in the white parishes to sing spirituals.

The priests in that parish were wonderful. The rectory was like a house of hospitality; people came and went all day. Still when a family was evicted you'd only hear the cry to get the Reds. And the Reds would come. They would move the furniture and they'd be furious and righteous and understanding and helpful, all at the same time.

Maybe the evicted Catholics went to the rectory. But most of the people in that neighborhood were not Catholics and they'd cry "Get the Reds!" when they needed help.

These Reds too were young and seemed to be idealistic and romantic. I suppose some of them are suburban housewives today, and bond salesmen. Others—the less idealistic, the unromantic—are probably still Red.

Larry Parks says he was no longer a Communist when he played Al Jolson. Imagine a Communist singing "Mammy."

JOHN COGLEY.

Journeys Out of Fear

Nine thousand persons a month appeal to the refugee headquarters in West Berlin.

By CHARLES R. JOY

"PHOTOGRAPHS are strictly forbidden by order of the City Government of Berlin." The sign confronted me with its conspicuous black letters when I entered the large building to which the refugees come in Berlin for registration and recognition. "Why?" I asked the director a few moments later. "Because it is dangerous," she replied. "We accept here in West Berlin only those refugees from the East who are imperilled. We will not take them unless they face danger to life and limb. But the photograph itself constitutes a danger to them, and to their people. If it is published or seen by the authorities in the Eastern Zone they may be recognized; they and their relations may suffer because they have tried to escape. In fact, the people you photograph may come to us and say, 'Now you have to accept us. Someone has taken our picture. Now we don't dare go back.'"

I took no pictures. Yet I was sorry, for the faces and clothing of these people were a revelation of misery and degradation. I took no pictures of those standing on the steps and streaming into the building; I took no pictures of the little knots of people along the sidewalk who were discussing their problems; I took no pictures of the long queues crowding the corridors before the doors where their fate was to be decided; of the old men and women with lined, care-worn faces; of the young men and women whose features showed a dozen years of danger, privation, hunger, cold, illness and frustration. I took no pictures of the mothers who were there with their tiny babies, or the fathers whose small children clung to their sides. All of these people had one problem in common, a problem of insecurity. And they believed there was only one answer—escape, escape to the West.

I took no pictures, but listened to their stories as they told them, one after another, and I watched their faces. For two hours I sat there, and realized that I was witnessing the whole gamut of human emotions, hope and despair,

exultation and depression, joy and anger, tears and laughter. It seemed almost as if I were present at the judgment day, and was watching while men and women and little children were admitted to paradise or condemned to hell, while in between was a purgatory of uncertainty.

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"YOU were here in July," the official said to the woman sitting before him, "and you were told that we could not admit you. Why did you come back again?"

"I did not come back. I have been in West Berlin all the time."

"Why didn't you return to the East Zone?"

"I can't return. I have nothing to go back to. My daughter is in the West in training as a nurse. My husband is here. You have recognized him as a political prisoner, and admitted him to West Berlin. Our property has been taken away from us, confiscated. I have nothing to go back to, and no way of earning a living there."

"I'm sorry. We cannot accept you. You are not in any personal danger. We cannot accept a whole family because one member has been recognized as a political refugee. You will have to go back." And the official wrote a few words at the bottom of the record, signed his initials, and stamped on the paper the fateful word, "*Erledigt*," case closed. A divided family, a broken home, but what other decision could he reach? The woman slowly got up from her chair. It seemed as if she had grown older by ten years. The official nodded to the man at the door, and as the latter opened to admit the next person, I could see a score of anxious faces waiting outside.

A man of about fifty, serious, intelligent. He had been an official in the CDU (*Christliche Demokratische Union*), a political party. He had been discussing political questions, he said, perhaps too freely, for in the people's democracies the democratic discussion of issues by the people is dangerous, and free elections, as in the old Hitler days, mean freedom only to vote for a single slate of candidates. So he had received a warning from his friends that he had better leave. He did not know the exact danger awaiting him. He did not stay to find out.

Well, what should be done with this man? He

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might indeed be a political refugee. He might be a spy. He said he knew a reporter on a Berlin newspaper. He was sent upstairs for more checking.

A young man of twenty. A member of the FDJ (*Freie Deutsche Jugend*), the Communist organization of young people. Although he was a youth leader the SED (*Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschland*) the dominant political party in the East Zone, was not satisfied with his ardor and put someone in his group to watch him. Shortly after the great youth gathering in Berlin at Whitsuntide, he heard that he was going to be arrested. So he fled to the Russian sector of Berlin and lived and worked there illegally. One day a week earlier he had been accosted by two people on the street. They told him to come with them. He recognized his danger and made a dash for it. He escaped. The police in West Berlin had verified his statements. He would be recognized and permitted to stay.

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ANOTHER young man, eighteen this time. He had been ordered to report to the uranium mines, and had fled to East Berlin, where he had managed to get a laborer's job. That very morning as he was going to work he was arrested and taken off in a street car. But he jumped off the car and came at once to West Berlin to ask for recognition because of the danger he faced.

"You work like that with a shirt and necktie?"

"Yes, I used to be a clerk, and I am used to dressing like that."

"I am sorry, but I don't believe your story. You will have to go back. The worst that will happen to you is that you will go to the uranium mines. We can't accept people just because they have had a notice to report there. Go back and tell the police you are ready to go to the mines now. Make up some story to explain why you ran away. There is nothing we can do for you." *Erledigt.*

Then the official turned to me to explain. "For six months now we have had to refuse the people who come here because they do not want to work in the uranium mines. Of course, if this young man goes to the mines, escapes and comes back again, or if they keep him there longer than his contract calls for, and then escapes and comes back, we shall have to admit him, for then he would be in real danger if we sent him back."

A man of thirty-two. He had been working in the uranium mines and on the side had been conducting some kind of an illegal business. He had been detected and had been sentenced to fifteen months in prison. Then he was released for a brief period because his wife was about to have her second child. Leaving his wife and children

he had come to seek admission to West Berlin.

"Oh no!" said the official. "What you were sentenced for would be a crime here also for which we should have had to punish you. Go back and serve your sentence." *Erledigt!*

A man of forty-five. He had been arrested and sentenced to ten years at Sachsenhausen for having some sort of weapon in his room. After a few years he had been released for good conduct, and had gotten a job as a telephonist. Then they had begun to ask him to do all kinds of political work, which he had refused to do. Finally they asked him to accept a position on a Peace Committee. This, too, he had refused. So he had been discharged from his job, was now unemployed and had come to West Berlin to seek admission.

Unfortunately he could not be admitted. He would have to go back and find another job. Of course, he would have great difficulty getting one, and in the end would probably have to take one of the dangerous jobs in the uranium mines. But finding a job would be difficult in West Berlin also. It was too bad he had not come here directly from the concentration camp. Then he would have been admitted.

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ONE O'clock. The morning's work was over. It was time for lunch. The hard pressed official got up and announced that no more cases would be heard until the afternoon. His was a difficult, a nerve-wracking, a head-splitting, a heart-wrenching task. He had made many people unhappy that morning, but what else was there to do? "If we admitted all who wanted to come," said one of Berlin's top officials to me, the whole 18,000,000 from the East Zone would come pouring into the West, and the Russians and Poles would take their places in the East. That would be turning over one great section of our country to foreigners. We do the best we can. We take all those who in our opinion are in any danger, but we can't be too sympathetic. We are bearing a frightful burden."

His face showed the burden, and I knew how great it was. This was only a tiny glimpse of it that I had seen that morning. About 400 people a day were coming to this central office for refugees in Berlin, day after day, day after day. That meant about 9,000 men, women, young people, and children every month.

From the first of January, 1950, until the end of July, 87,000 had come for registration, but only 20,000 had been admitted as political refugees. During the past year and a half 47,934 had been admitted. They came for various reasons: 63% for political reasons; 10.2% to escape the terrible service in the uranium mines; 5.9% because the NKVD was after them, or because

they had escaped from them; 1.7% because their property had been taken away from them; 1.2% were members of the East Zone people's police; 18% came for various other reasons. Of the 47,934 admitted since January 1949, 1,718 were under eighteen and 13,798, by far the largest single group, were between eighteen and twenty-five. One quarter of them wanted to stay in West Berlin, three-quarters wanted to go to the Western Zones.

They are handled with great care and with every consideration. First of all they are sent to the physician for careful examination, for they come with various diseases. If they are sick they are sent to a hospital, regardless of the final disposition of their cases. Next they are sent to the Allied offices for checking and questioning. Then, for the first time they are registered with the central refugee office. They are requested to make a written statement of their case, which is put in their file. All this takes several days.

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IF THEY are accepted, and have no money or relations, they are placed in one of the many refugee camps. Then the task is to find work for them. Seven hundred and fifty jobs a month are given out by the refugee office, but of course this is utterly inadequate, and there is great distress among the refugees even when they are recognized. Every effort is made to get them out of Berlin. If they have friends or relations in the Western Zones, Berlin tries to secure a permit of residence for them there, and pays their air passage westward. For of course they cannot travel by train over the Eastern Zone to the West. They would be taken off by the East Zone police.

The ragged wretchedness of these people is evident when you visit the crowded camps of Berlin. There at night you can find them sleeping in their two-decker bunks on straw mattresses, or stretched out on the floor because there are no bunks for them, thirty people sleeping sometimes in a room 24 x 24 feet in dimensions, kept warm by a couple of CARE blankets. Their miserable clothing hangs on nails beside their sleeping places, tattered and torn (how can they mend them?), thin and worn (how can they replace them?), greasy and dirty (how can they clean them?). As for the underclothes, when they exist at all they beggar description.

And babies are born in these camps constantly, so that the need of layettes is appalling. "Here in Berlin," said one of the camp directors to me, "we still need everything. Did you notice the shoes the people are wearing here?"

If America could see the extent of this present and increasing distress, CARE packages of all kinds, food and clothing, blankets and linen and layettes would come streaming into Germany.

FROM ITALY

Christians And/Or Bourgeois?

HAS organized Christianity become altogether too bourgeois? Or has the working class at large never been Christian, even in the old times?

These two questions, repeated again and again, give an idea of the problem Christians in Europe face now. The reply to the first question is yes. Particularly since the last century, Christianity had gone almost exclusively bourgeois, at the cost of losing the working masses. The reply to the second question is no. The working people of other ages were Christian, infinitely more than now. But the loss of the Christian tradition among the working class in Europe, even in historically Catholic countries like France, southern Germany and Italy, and even among women, is a fact.

In the large industrial areas now Christians live in small isolated communities, as set-off and ignored as if they were sun worshippers or vegetarians. The fact that the working class is almost all pagan, in its outlook and in its life, is unprecedented. In other days large numbers of the population may have been pagan too, but never a whole class. And that is believed to be one of the reasons why today this class has fallen victim so easily to Communism, the cheap substitute for a forgotten religion.

The response to this unhappy situation has been the priest-worker movement in France and projects like Nomadelpia in Italy. They are pioneer efforts to reconquer what has been lost. They are trying to create a new manifestation of Christianity, on a missionary basis, a proletarian manifestation as it were, which might appear shocking to Christians steeped in the bourgeois tradition. They are trying to create a Christian climate where the working people can feel at home, where they can become Christian again without feeling obliged to become bourgeois, where the workers can be Christian *and* proletarian, not Christian *or* proletarian. And thus these pioneers see the need to return to the spirit of the Gospel at the same time that they take care of what their elders have neglected.

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SINCE I first reported on Nomadelpia in northern Italy near Modena and "the mad priest" Don Zeno Saltini, who is leading this venture, (July 14, 1950) it has developed further. Four young members of the Servants of Mary have left the order, not without strong resistance from their superiors, to join Don Zeno's selected team of priests who earn their living working hard with their hands and who take care of souls at the same time.

Two of the newcomers are working in the lonely

settlement in the middle of the woods near Grosseto in Tuscany, where Nomadelpia II is rising. About two hundred people are living there in tents and primitive huts without the most elementary comfort, preparing the foundations of the second town "where fraternity is law." Most of them have been with Don Zeno for more than ten years. There are several young couples and a young architect, who left his family, his future and everything a year ago and is happy to consecrate the rest of his life to Nomadelpia. Now he is working as a bricklayer after having drawn up the plans for the new town.

Most of the kids are in Nomadelpia I near Modena, but it has already been made evident that Nomadelpia II was founded for children. A couple of weeks ago one of the "mothers" brought to the hospital in Grosseto one of her older boys, who has already finished school and is working with Don Zeno's veterans. She discovered in the hospital a ten year old boy who had all the qualifications for Nomadelpia. He is an orphan from a milieu which will make it impossible for him ever to be adopted. Most orphanages would hesitate to take him. Another hopeless case. He was brought to Nomadelpia II immediately. He arrived at the same time as a servant girl who had tried to commit suicide. She is expecting a child by a man who left her. She was brought by another of Nomadelpia's "mothers." Her child will be Nomadelpia's first native citizen. The girl is welcome to remain with the child if she chooses to, or to leave it to one of the "mothers" who will take care of it as if it were her own.

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AS NOMADELPHIA II is founded on the same principles as Nomadelpia I, it is tens of thousands of dollars ahead of any normal credit. Impatient creditors are attacking it from all sides. They definitely don't agree with Don Zeno's slogan "The children can't wait, but the creditors can—always." The other day one of them seized the only shabby lorry Nomadelpia II has for its connections with the outside world. One of the ex-Servites was dispatched to Rome in a hurry to ask for help. And it seems that the inhabitants of Nomadelpia II are as helpless, and at the same time as certain of victory in the end, as the disciples of Saint Francis in this very land more than seven hundred years ago. The question of the lorry is still pending.

The creditors of Nomadelpia II have a strong argument though. They are pointing to another institution, only seventy miles south on the Via Aurelia to Rome, which is similar to Nomadelpia but still very different. It is an institution with a very solid financial position. Its name is not unknown in the United States, as it is mainly run by generous American gifts. The Boys Town at Santa Marinella has many points of contact with Father Flanagan's well-known foundation. It was founded by an admirable Italian priest, Don Rivolta.

A good part of its funds were collected by a very able young Irish priest, Monsignor Carroll-Abbing, who has received many well deserved honors in the United States

and in Italy for his efforts. More than one hundred lucky boys are living there, practicing a sort of self-government and all learning a trade so they may start life as skilled workers. Many others have preceded the boys now there. The Italian Boys Town is located in a surrounding close to the sea, which would seem an incredible luxury to the inhabitants of Nomadelpia I and II. Ministers of State, Cardinals and other important people visit them and admire their training and their self-government. There is no doubt that they appear to be much nicer, much better educated and better dressed than the boys of the two Nomadelpias. And not one of the beautiful buildings of the Boys Town at Santa Marinella had its foundation laid until the cash was on the table. No wonder that the creditors of Nomadelpia II appreciate it so much.

Nobody among the now nearly fifteen hundred inhabitants of the two Nomadelpias thinks of criticizing the Boys Town. But they have become very conscious of the fact that they have chosen a different road, particularly since Monsignor Carroll-Abbing came into the picture. The inhabitants of Nomadelpia know that even they might have lived as comfortably as the inhabitants of the Boys Town if they only had restricted themselves to a few hundred and avoided going into debt. They have deliberately chosen to live permanently on the edge of bankruptcy. The nearly two hundred thousand children in Italy alone who are qualified to enter Nomadelpia can't wait. Every day, every week, every month may spell disaster for thousands of them. A new war might break out, and Nomadelpia wishes to be as strong, as numerous, as widespread as possible in order to meet any eventuality. It wishes to make its inhabitants Christians, first of all, even though they remain proletarians. There is no time—and certainly no necessity—to make nice clean bourgeois out of them. Maybe they wouldn't feel at home in the bourgeois world. Christians *and* proletarians, not Christians *or* proletarians.

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PERHAPS this is the secret of the mysterious attraction Nomadelpia has on all sorts of people—on priests who feel that they have not had what they were looking for because their work tended to be too bureaucratic, formalized; on professional people with a future who gave up everything for it as if they were under a spell; and above all on men and women of the lower classes—on plain industrial workers, on peasants and farm workers, who all understand what a mother's love for a child means, even if the child is not her own, but who don't understand why Christianity has to be involved with all kinds of difficult bourgeois manners.

Letters have arrived at Nomadelpia from people in the United States, in England, in Turkey and even China, people who wish to drop everything and join in. The same mysterious attraction is exercised by the French priest-workers. Without knowing each other, they and the founders of Nomadelpia have followed the same line, obeyed the same deep-felt necessity: return to the spirit of the Gospel and the spirit of many of the old

orders. This spirit has led them to reestablish contact with the class to which Christ Himself preached.

One of the worker-priests, himself a miner in Central France, told me recently how difficult his missionary work was. He said that in spite of the numerous drawbacks suffered by the Communist Party, most of the best and keenest of his fellow workers in the mine were Communists. His first job, he said, was to gain their confidence in the ordinary matters of everyday life, in order to show them that Christians are not necessarily Pharisees, plutocrats and class enemies, but can be good comrades and hard workers. The working class in France, he said, is like a child who has become wild and rebellious because of neglect and ill-treatment. When his fellow-miners feel the warmth of genuine love which at least tries to be unselfish, their diffidence melts away. They open their hearts and then it seems that many of them are naturally Christian, in their own coarse way, without knowing it themselves.

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THIS priest made a distinction between the militant Communism in Western Europe now and the triumphant Communism on the other side of the Curtain. When Communism passes from the militant stage to the other, it undergoes a big change. This is its critical phase. Overnight the party changes. It goes fishing for proselytes no more. The party rolls are closed. If this ever happens in France, and it is not impossible, the best of his Communist comrades, the idealists, will wake from their dream of freedom and happiness, to the terrible realities of Communism's blind bureaucratic terror, he held. Then the idealists will be eliminated from the party, either voluntarily or by force, like flowers disappearing when the poisonous fruit ripens. Then the hour of the priest-workers will come. To be ready for this or any other circumstance, at the price of any sacrifice, is their aim. It is the aim too of Don Zeno and those who have joined him in the work of Nomadelpia.

GUNNAR D. KUMLIEN.

An Appeal

THE COMMONWEAL has received the following communication from the Rev. Père M. Mellet, O.P., professor at the University of Lyon.

"His Eminence the Cardinal-Archbishop of Lyon has placed in my care a new religious community called the Dominicans of Ste. Marie. This community was founded to give sick and infirm young ladies an opportunity to live a religious life, according to a rule suited to their condition, which they would otherwise not have. . . . Our end is double, religious and social: to save religious vocations—the world certainly needs prayers!—and to serve the sick. We have many applicants for admission, not only from France but from abroad. . . . France's charity is worthy of all praise but understandably limited in these times. We must look for help from across the Atlantic." Address: Père M. Mellet, Dominicaines de Ste. Marie, Genay, Ain, France.

SO THEY TELL ME

What's In a Name?

"GOD spare us from our friends" is a remark which must have been uttered by the first man who acknowledged friendship.

For it is clear that our friends are great burdens to us. If we are wounded by our enemies we will fight. Often an armed truce exists between enemies. The relationship is seldom disturbed by hypocrisy. Indeed an enemy is often defined by honesty in the sense that nothing he does surprises us. If he fools us we feel chagrin and are shamefaced at our dereliction from vigilance and alertness. We renew our vows to score over him and are impatient for the opportunity. Kindness from our enemy disconcerts us, for it breaks the rules, defeats our normal expectations and dissolves the fixed relationship. Men there have been who were unable long to survive the death of an old enemy. They could not live under the strain of unoccupied vitality.

But friends constantly embarrass us. Not the least of the difficulty is our felt need to defend them, excuse them, or even to forgive them. Nothing is inexpensive in life, but the price for friendship is often exorbitant. Secretly we wish on occasion that some Mike DiSalle could be present to establish and maintain ceilings over this kind of price. But there never is any Mr. DiSalle. By what seems a kind of natural law, friendship is a thing that flourishes in a laissez-faire atmosphere; it will wilt at the first sign of foreign intervention. The plain fact is that we must put up with the troubles friendship involves. Like a wife's relatives they are a necessary, though obviously difficult, part of the bargain. No more than you court the relatives do you court the difficulties; but the separation—as in the case of King Solomon's child—is almost impossible to make.

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BUT there are times when you must take a stand. This, then, is one of the times. Thomas P. Murphy, the flamboyant and valorous Police Commissioner of New York, has betrayed our friendship for him. He has disquieted us. We are incredulous, and then shamefaced. We look in all directions for aid, we seek defense in every corner. But nothing availeth. We can run, but there is no place to hide. Like a baying hound the Commissioner's words pursue us.

St. Patrick's Day dinners in the United States are yearly as thick as the snakes in Ireland which the myth assigns to St. Patrick the honor of having driven out. An exuberant people, few of whom were born in Ireland, celebrate in artificially patriotic wantonness a country most of them have never seen, a country which once

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properly sought their aid and, quite properly, requested their advice. Apart from the fact that St. Patrick's Day dinners have often been thinly covered political occasions, flamboyantly oratorical field days for professional and ambitious "Irishmen," it is understandable that the place of our blood-origins should receive celebration.

Few people have so reveled in the power of the English language to express and satisfy emotion, fuse them into seeming common identity, as have the Irish, especially in America.

The Irish, hedged about, lonely, insecure, full of disenchantment, needed the praise of their own, their acrimonious and acidulous hatred of the British, the need to define themselves as "good Americans" in a country which once refused them trust or even tolerance.

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BUT one would have thought that time was over. One would have thought that not even the sense of euphoria and exuberance which is part of oratory, and which flows from its power to elicit praise and laughter and applause, could have driven Mr. Murphy into such unsecured and wild flight.

Yet Mr. Murphy said in Cincinnati: "I can't even recall one Irish name among the many thousand called before the House Committee on Un-American Activities. If there was, he probably changed his name."

I do not know why Mr. Murphy thinks the Irish are still so helpless in our country that they need this self-flattering unction. Their sense of unaggrieved powerlessness must be greater than I thought, their sense of inferiority larger than I thought, if they found comfort in this nothingness.

What sane American praises the record of the Un-American Activities Committee under J. Parnell Thomas? I wonder what would have happened if some skeptical Irishman had reminded Mr. Murphy of the whole career of Mr. Thomas—or of Feeney, his real name? Mr. Murphy could have replied that this proved nothing about a group—that *men* err—and he would have been right.

Mr. Murphy praised "the galaxy of Irishmen in the vanguard of our country's fight against Communism." Only one of the men, he said, who testified for Mr. Alger Hiss was Irish, "but he was one of the psychiatrists, and besides he came from Harvard."

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THE temptation to reply to Mr. Murphy in terms of his own vocabulary is almost irresistible. For a New Yorker or a Bostonian the evidence for such a reply rises uncomfortably. Names, which have not been changed, clamor for presentation. One thinks of the great work Mr. Murphy has done in his new job and of the unchanged names of those he has been required to deal with—of the names of men demoted, broken, resigned—of the waivers of immunity unsigned. One puts his hands up to his ears, and hides his face in silent and in scarlet shame.

One thinks of the names at Bougainville or at Iwo

Jima. And he thinks of the names of men—the four chaplains, for example—who drowned so bravely in the pitiless seas. One thinks of Whittaker Chambers' name, which Americans have so ambivalently received.

He thinks of the often unpronounceable names of men in mines and steel mills, in auto shops, in factory and in field, in the labor movement, in CIO unions, who have dealt internal Communism its severest blow. One thinks of the names of the Jewish Labor Committee, of its underground, its bridges into the Resistance movement, its perilous saving of anti-Communist refugees. He thinks of Franklin D. Roosevelt's name, of the era of almost absolute despair, of the malignant fear of fear itself, of windows jumped from and throats cut, of the named and nameless millions hungry and unemployed—of capitalism saved by the New Deal.

He thinks kindly of the multitudinous names of all the living and the dead who dreamed an unextinguishable dream that our country could recognize and cherish difference, while yet producing strength and harmony. One thinks of Jacob Riis's conception of a map of New York City, which, "colored to designate nationalities, would show more stripes than on the skin of a zebra, and more colors than any rainbow."

He thinks of the immigrant, his father and his mother, and that once they, Irish as they were, were regarded as having "accents of menace alien to our air."

He remembers the attacks on Irish Catholics so unjust—of the Know Nothings, of the rise of the invidious phrase, hyphenated Americans. He remembers the poor quality of the case against Al Smith, the hateful fires, the crosses flaming in the hostile night. But he remembers, too, the name of Tammany, of Boss Croker and the four courts of Dublin, of tin boxes secret, with thickening cash.

He thinks of many names in New York, along its waterfront, of murder in the threatful night; of names in New Jersey, and in Wisconsin and in many states.

He thinks of the names of the men on the Un-American Activities Committee; he knows that what was un-American was never defined.

He thinks of the names of some who make a profession out of visceral and undefined attacks on something loosely called Communism. He thinks of Dr. Johnson's remark that "patriotism is the last refuge of scoundrels."

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HE THINKS that no group, no nationality, no race can dare to think it can corner the market on patriotism. Of all can it be said:

We came not empty-handed here.

But brought a rich inheritance.

He thinks Mr. Murphy blundered on St. Patrick's Day, full of patriotism, perhaps, and of no conscious evil intent. But he remembers the words of Aristophanes: "There are things, then, hotter than fire, there are speeches more shameless still, Than the shameless speeches of those who rule the city at will."

FRANCIS DOWNING.

The Stage

THE AUTUMN GARDEN

IT IS AS impossible to dismiss Lillian Hellman's new play as it is to give it an unqualified endorsement. Miss Hellman has begun by touching on what is surely a universal daydream—the notion each of us has that the irritations and compromises of day-to-day living are sometime, somehow, going to be miraculously resolved, and that, once we can rid ourselves of present frustrations, we are going to create for ourselves serene, adjusted, and happy lives. This failure to live in the moment, and to recognize the moment as the absolute condition of our lives, is one of the commoner drains upon our energies and even upon our collective sanity; so long as Miss Hellman is busy probing her characters for evidences of such malaise, her play is a fascinating one. She has drawn together, rather more arbitrarily than dramatically, a group of arresting people in their middle years, and she has, with a great deal of skill, forced each of them to see his longing for a personal millennium as the futile and devitalizing illusion it really is.

Miss Hellman has, however, still another point to make and another mental process to put her characters through: the recognition of the fact that they are by now imprisoned in the half-lives they have been living while waiting for the full life of the dream. The very compensations and substitutions they have adopted, in order to deal with life on a temporary basis, are now more potent than reality itself. Thus, the still youthful banker of the play, who has taken to drink while waiting for the woman of his dream to disengage herself from a prolonged infatuation with another man (*her* dream), is powerless to accept her when she finally does come to him; he would rather go back to the bars. Each of the characters in turn finds himself paralyzed by the wishful life of the past, and the play ends in a kind of Chekhovian stalemate.

There is no doubt great truth in the author's second point; it no doubt flows logically, and psychologically, from the first; and the two together, if developed as the story of one man, might have made a tragedy. I think Miss Hellman's difficulty—and the source of our dissatisfaction with the conclusion of the play—lies in her determination to handle it in multiples. That six or seven characters, only loosely related, should become emotionally petrified in precisely the same way is inescapably pat; the parallel construction leads to an unavoidable, and all too foreseeable, repetition of scenes in the last act; and the very lack of variety or balance in the case histories offends our sense of proportion. What may be demonstrably true of one man is not always statistically true of the species; it is Miss Hellman's bad luck that the species itself seems defeated by eleven o'clock, an impression which the audience is obviously reluctant to approve.

The production is in every way first-rate. Harold Clurman's direction is sensitive, Frederic March is as accurate and resourceful as ever (here is a man who, probably because of his overlong association with Hollywood, has never been given his real due), Florence Eldridge has her best part in years and is at her best in it, Ethel Griffies renews our dismay at the thought of her impending retirement, and Kent Smith, Colin Keith-Johnston, Jane Wyatt, Margaret Barker, and Joan Lorring are all on hand. I don't think you will be altogether exhilarated by this play; but I think you will find it interesting. (*At the Coronet*)

L'ECOLE DES FEMMES

THE American National Theatre and Academy has done us all a service in importing, for a brief engagement, Louis Jouvet's production of Moliere's "The School for Wives." For those of us who are unable to follow Moliere French or even any kind of spoken French—most of us as it turns out—the performance must be more informative than entertaining; nevertheless, Jouvet and company held the opening-night audience's attention far more firmly than have the last three or four Broadway ventures into easy English, and the theatre student who is interested in comparative acting styles or in the contemporary production of classic comedy is in for a real binge.

The production is revealing on several counts: it reminds us that an open acting style may also be an easy one; that stylization may be pointed without being forced; that direct address to the audience may be quite unselfconscious; that dimensional characterization is not confined to naturalistic techniques; that broad simplicity is every bit as interesting as fussy detail. Playwise, it reminds us that comedy may thrive as much on interior states as on exterior shenanigans, and that structural complexity is no substitution for insight.

It is at the same time possible to argue with some of M. Jouvet's effects. There is the same old gap, in make-up and deportment, between the low comedy servants and the high comedy masters. There is an unevenness about the more violent stage business: when Arnolphe is ransacking Agnes' room, Jouvet's direction is brilliantly funny and perfectly timed; when Horace is attempting to help Agnes to escape, the conception and execution are decidedly clumsy. There is also a question in my mind as to the advisability of certain of Jouvet's postures—perhaps his most striking effect is that of the slow collapse of his spine during a moment of defeat—in a characterization which should never ask for outright sympathy.

Jouvet's performance is not easy to gauge. He has been accustomed to playing to laughter rather than to a respectful silence; much of his facial activity is obviously intended to latch onto, and develop, a laugh begun in the lines. Without the laugh, the extended reaction cannot help but seem excessive; on the other hand, no one could expect him to alter his performance overnight for an American audience and still keep its essential

outlines intact. Suffice it to say that he is always in secure command of the stage, and if his work seems somewhat lacking in variety this is no doubt due to the fact that we are watching as a pantomime something which was not created as a pantomime—we are, in fact, watching something which finds its richest expression in the intelligence and the voice.

The rest of the production is almost an embarrassment of riches. Dominique Blanchard is, I think, the most attractive and skilful ingenue I have ever seen. Jean Richard turns what might have been an insipid juvenile into a model of drive and dexterity. The company is exceptional throughout; I was particularly taken with Rene Besson's few moments as a notary's clerk. The late Christian Berard's setting is a lesson in itself, ingeniously functional and visually enchanting at the same time. This is stage design at its best, design in which the useful and the pictorial qualities are everywhere synonymous. (*At the ANTA Playhouse*)

THE GREEN PASTURES

MARC CONNELLY'S dramatization of the Roark Bradford stories seems to me to have lost none of its charm or interest as a text, but Mr. Connelly's current revival has surely lost momentum and sustained dramatic interest as a production. All the old virtues—the unselfconscious naiveté, the genuine air of devotion, the passages of honest humor—are there, but you have to look for them. You have to peer through a scrim, for one thing—this practice of playing scenes behind gauze seems to me one of the more irritating developments of the determinedly pictorial theatre—and, between scenes, you must stare so long at a vacant curtain that it is constantly necessary to revive and refocus your attention. At the least, we might have *seen* the Hall Johnson choir during the many pauses in the action and so gone a little way toward establishing a sense of continuity.

More damaging than these physical and scenic delays, however, is an undue awe which seems to have overtaken director and actors alike. The production is curiously muted and remote, neither as familiar in tone nor as salty in attitude as the text would indicate; it suffers from an over-solemnity which seems to me to stem more from a reverence for the play—now that it is something of a modern classic—than for its subject matter. I am afraid, too, that William Marshall's performance as the Lord abets the over-all impression of unction rather than easygoing affection. Mr. Marshall is a handsome man, of imposing stature, and equipped with a powerful voice; but his voice is held—either by Mr. Connelly's direction or by its own limitations—to such a consistently sonorous level, and his rate of speech is made so relentlessly regular, as to produce a final effect of monotony.

On the bright side of things, Ossie Davis is a wonderful Gabriel, Avon Long is ingratiating in several roles, Alonzo Bosan, Robert McFerrin, and John Bouie have an effective scene together as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and John Marriott makes a forceful Moses.

In all fairness, I must mention that this is a minority report; the revival has been embraced with open arms in most quarters. And if you have never seen "The Green Pastures" I suppose that even this production will offer you many small rewards. My objection is that they are too small, too isolated, and too unemphatic; the audience with which I saw the play was restless long before the final curtain could come down. (*At the Broadway*)

SPRINGTIME FOR HENRY

BENN LEVY'S old play has always seemed to me a relatively bright example of minor-league manners comedy, and Edward Everett Horton has always been one of my favorite farceurs. Furthermore, Mr. Horton has now been playing the piece for something like eighteen years, and this is clearly no time to be telling him that he is not well cast in it. He isn't, though; the play gives him very little opportunity to exploit his familiar and very funny mannerisms, and he in turn keeps the play from acquiring that bland urbanity of style without which it is merely wearing. Horton has standardized himself as a fidgety mouse; the play calls for a confident rake. Horton is an exponent of the grimace; the play is written deadpan. If, after all these years of tinkering with it, the actor has been able to invent surprisingly few bits of stage business for himself, it is because the play outwits and muffles him at every turn. When, in the third act, he does stumble upon a valid opportunity for pantomime, the success of the sequence is a dead giveaway: so long as he and the other characters are reduced to silence, Mr. Horton is masterly and the play is a riot. Within three minutes the audience is reduced to hysterics—in part by a really inspired comic image: that of a man who, poised for a tango, cannot locate a starting beat in the music—and, while this is going on, I am sure no one in the theatre wishes to hear a word spoken again. But, unhappily, the dialogue must be taken up, the play must go on, and the broad farceur must once more be pinned down to brittle, nonchalant, and entirely uncharacteristic lines. It is a frustrating experience for those out front, and it should be for Mr. Horton, too. I suppose all the money he has made out of it keeps him from feeling *too* frustrated; but what about the rest of us who, wanting to see him, can only go to "Springtime for Henry" again and again and *again*? In fact, I'm going to make this official: I'm through with it. (*At the Golden*)

WALTER KERR.

Coming May 4th

The Commonweal's

SPRING BOOK ISSUE

The Screen

DOING GOD'S WILL—THEIR WAY

A GAIN and again as I was watching the fascinating French film, "*Dieu a besoin des hommes*," I was reminded of something a priest once said to a man who was having difficulty living a virtuous life: "You really want to do God's will; but you want to do it your way." That is the trouble with the simple fisher folk in "*God Needs Men*" (as this film, with English subtitles by Sherry Mangan and Herman Weinberg, will be known in the U.S. These people want to be Christians; they want to go to Mass; they want to go to confession; they have a great need of religion; but they want everything on their own terms.

The trouble started (the film is all told as a real incident that happened a hundred years ago on the Isle of Sein off the coast of Brittany) when the natives continued to pray for shipwrecks because their barren island yielded such a poor living. Their priest warned them over and over that they had no right to pray for such destruction—especially when these shipwrecks resulted in the death of men. Finally the priest decided it was hopeless and he left the people to their own salvation.

On the following Sunday the people come to the Church anyway; they persuade the sexton to lead them in services. He gives them a sound lashing in a sermon; he takes the meager collection; he leads their singing of the Credo. As the days go on he finds himself taking over other non-sacramental duties of the priest. Then when the time comes for his pregnant sister-in-law to have her baby, she insists on being taken to the mainland, in spite of the protests of the islanders, who hold the mainlanders in disdain. On the way over in the boat, the frightened woman insists that the sexton hear her confession.

Later when his work gets more and more complicated, the sexton goes to the mainland again—to plead with an abbé that a priest be sent to the people of Sein who need one so badly. The indignant abbé treats the sexton perfunctorily; and when the troubled sexton finally gets back to the island rectory, after braving a storm, he finds a real problem thrust on him: one of the islanders has killed his insane mother. "What penance do you give a son who has killed his mother?"

When the abbé from the mainland does finally come to the Isle of Sein (just as the sexton is preparing to go through the ritual of the Mass) he comes with the gendarmes; and the islanders are immediately suspicious. The man who killed his insane mother gets panicky, thinks the police are coming for him and commits suicide. The sexton gives him "absolution"; and the abbé refuses to bury him in consecrated ground. Under the sexton's leadership, the rebellious natives take the corpse to sea—and then follow the sexton back to land, to church where the abbé is waiting to say Mass. They hope for forgiveness.

IF "GOD NEEDS MEN" doesn't do anything else, it shows that men need God and religion, and it shows that the life of a priest is no thing of ease (in spite of the accusations made by an island bully). The film has been beautifully photographed under the direction of Jean Delannoy; and the acting, though exaggerated at times, is done with a moving sincerity. As the sexton, Pierre Fresnay gives a fine performance that comes up to his "Monsieur Vincent." Although the picture sets up problems which it does not solve (like the business of praying for the shipwrecks, and the ambiguous finale without submission to the abbé) "*God Needs Men*" will hold your interest from beginning to end. You may wish, however, as I did, that scriptwriters Pierre Bost and Jean Aurenche had continued their plot to the logical end of Henri Queffelec's original novel in which the sexton decides to become a priest.

★

THERE is no doubt that some Catholics will be disturbed by "*God Needs Men*," particularly with such scenes in this strictly adult film as when the sexton explains "*Et Homo factus est*," or when he gives "absolution" to the suicide, or when he prepares to "say Mass" in spite of the fact that his housekeeper tells him off with: "All you can do with bread is eat it, while a real priest can change it into God."

Others may be disturbed that the abbé treats the sexton and the islanders with such lack of understanding. Although the abbé is always right in his decisions, there is certainly nothing gentle or fatherly in his outward behavior. The one thing that bothered me most is that the original priest on the Isle of Sein would walk out on his congregation.

★

THE picture was awarded first prize at the 1950 Venice Film Festival by the International Catholic Film Office. At the time the President of the jury said: "It seems to us that in the present state of de-Christianization or religious indifference among the masses, this beautiful and impressive film is capable of reawakening religious sentiments; the notion and regret for sin; the necessity of the priesthood and the sacraments. We feel that the positive influence it will exert in this sense, especially if it is interpreted as it ought to be by responsible critics, will quite outweigh the danger of a false interpretation at the hands of one section of the public."

Obviously a film as controversial as "*God Needs Men*" is not dull. It is full of compassion for people—even for superstitious people, sinners and protesting people who insist on doing God's will their way. And obviously the film's appeal is limited—and should be. But it will interest the kind of audiences who like to mull over the problems put forth in books like *Brideshead Revisited*, *The Power and the Glory* and *The Heart of the Matter*—audiences who believe the sinner is the heart of the matter, the sinner and the saint.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

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From Main Street to the World So Wide

By SERGE HUGHES

ALTHOUGH there are no illusions as to the merits of Sinclair Lewis' later novels, the general indifference to his death is still somewhat surprising. So strong, apparently, is the feeling that Lewis is "dated," that he was dead long before he died, that only the obituary notices and now the publication of his last novel, *World So Wide* (Random House, \$3) have been able to puncture this indifference. This situation will not last. It will not last in part because Lewis did have something to say, in part because his times are now enjoying a surprising revival of interest, and in part because every last novel has a definite romantic appeal, enhanced by the author's delicacy in being dead.

Most literary revivals should, of course, be suspect. It is hard to distinguish between a fad and a need, and too many revivals are of dubious motivation. There is no doubt, for example, that a revival such as that of F. Scott Fitzgerald is pushed by not a few who are impatient to show that America has had just as anguished and tormented an artist as Europe ever had. A Lewis revival could never become that popular. (The Lewis "legend" has not yet crystallized.) But if it becomes popular at all, it will have to solve the problem of *Babbitt* and its relation to the rest of Lewis' work. This problem throws enough light on the nature and value of Sinclair Lewis' art to make great enthusiasm for his work impossible. Why? Because Lewis novels succeed only when dealing with serious moral issues which remain unsolved, and fail completely when they present a solution. Lewis' solutions are either obviously inadequate or sentimental. *Babbitt* makes this clear.

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WHO is Babbitt? He is a theory (the obvious symbol of the American bourgeoisie) and a person. The two aspects do not always converge in a common center. Regrettably, he is so fashioned that he lives more as the embodiment of certain values than as the fictional character, the person, George Babbitt.

For us, he cannot be a symbol of a past age. The man who hates labor unions, abhors the word Socialism, looks upon his home town as the citadel of good fellowship, who has an unlimited faith in gadgets, still exists. In

spite of two wars. In spite of the Second World War. It does not matter that the most conservative farmers appreciate such socialist-tinted measures as parity prices that labor unions have become as respectable as businessmen's clubs, that there is a greater readiness to acknowledge Europe's existence and that even the faith in a benevolent science has already bred its first heretics. Babbitt's changes have been superficial, as only a few months ago Peter Viereck showed in the pages of *THE COMMONWEAL* (September 15, 1950). How important are the changes? Extensive enough to be deceptive, not profound enough to conceal completely.

The most important change is that the new Babbitt has grasped the fact that modern culture is fragmentary. With craftiness, luck, a lot of nerve, he has accordingly selected some of its most impressive packages. Knowing that intellectual fashions are determined by cliques, he can be a liberal one minute, a conservative the next; a humanitarian one moment, the next the prophet of apocalypse. He has taken what is the cream of conviction, the attitude, and has counterfeited it on a scale at which his more naive predecessor would have marveled. The most recent pose of Babbitt, as an example, is that of torment and despair.

★

THAT power which the old Babbitt gradually lost has today been re-acquired by his son. The same qualities that won power for the father have been preserved and perfected by the son. More subtle caution and confidence, a breezier ignorance, a more cleverly concealed desire for steadiness, a better disguised belief in certain fundamental things in life which are not at all basic. At times the change is ridiculously obvious, as in the case of formal education: the revolt against the bourgeois never gets past the Contemporary American Novel course. It does, however, give the student a sense of snobbishness and deliverance, and to the professor it gives a sense of elegiac voluptuousness in caressing his sensitivities and his perceptiveness, so completely ineffective in a materialistic civilization.

In addition to this change, there is another important one in reference to number. There may have been a vague presentiment of this in the novel when Babbitt temporarily adopting a Bohemian defiance of the world became more and more of a radical until the sudden serious illness of his wife. The Babbitt ideal more than any other has been made perfectly adaptable to mass production technique. Like sleek sedans, the new Babbitt is accessible to more people, and is not bound to any particular economic class. Thus, the modern Babbitt may be a union leader discussing a Cocteau film in a little known, excellent Hungarian restaurant, or the head of a small factory who appreciates Chartreuse has a collection of Renoir reproductions, and tries to understand the problems of his brother, the working man.

It does not require any insight to be aware of the hollowness of this ideal. Such criticism has become a Babbitt trait: nothing so bourgeois as to criticize the

SERGE HUGHES is on the faculty of St. John's University in Brooklyn, where he teaches courses in modern language and literature.

bourgeoisie. What is important is that the increasing complexity of the modern situation by paralyzing many fine minds has brought about in Europe an ideal effectively worse than Babbitt, and in America a tremendous increase in power for Babbitt, who apparently has not been arrested by this complexity. The modern Babbitt can effectively answer most of his critics by pointing out that at a time when everyone is to some extent paralyzed by doubts, he acts.

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IT IS THE drama which Sinclair Lewis has given this problem that entitles him to a revival of interest. But since the drama has been resolved neither in society nor in art it is quite understandable that to be constantly reminded of a dilemma without its resolution is to insure unpopularity for oneself.

Yet, acid as Lewis is in his criticism of Babbitt's values, he cannot be harsh with the person. How can he? What are the alternatives for Babbitt, who can encounter no one outside of his friends except phony bohemians and hypocritical ministers of religion? At best Babbitt's religiosity is confined to an uneasiness when confronted with smugness, indignation when confronted with hypocrisy. No strong moral convictions can be expected to grow on such thin soil. The only solution for Babbitt, the complete giving of himself to his wife, a superficial, vain, but faithful woman, is quite understandable. That faithfulness is for Babbitt the value in life, the constant in life which endows existence with a herd-like feeling of companionship. But if his wife is the personal solution she is so at the cost of never resolving his moral and ideological problems. All the nonsense about Lewis' photographic style cannot conceal the skill with which this dilemma procures pity for Babbitt just as certainly as two nickels fill a cup with coffee at the Automat.

The interest in this dilemma was partly responsible for Lewis' two other most successful works, *Arrowsmith* and *Dodsworth*. Were it not that Lewis' humor is always sarcastic and rarely has anything of the absurd about it, one could almost think that he wrote *Arrowsmith* as a bugaboo to scare hell out of the critics and the readers. For how does *Arrowsmith* solve those peculiar bourgeois moral problems of Babbitt? He avoids them in an immoral ivory-tower, scientific-laboratory solution. This scientist's god is research, a jealous god who subordinates everything and everyone to himself, as any god must do.

To attain the goal, he must abandon medicine, which is soiled by crass commercial purposes and implies a vulgar anthropomorphism. He must abandon his wife if she stands in the way, for even a woman cannot be pared. He must let his child go if he shows no interest in this god. He must be perfectly indifferent to any implications of the subject he is studying outside of the purely scientific ones. And Lewis' hero in this book, at the end, breaks all his ties with society to devote himself completely, together with a friend, to experimentation and research. The rebellion against Babbitt could hardly

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be more thorough. If there are any followers of the Arrowsmith ideal today, however, they are probably working on some atomic project in New Mexico or elsewhere. Fortunately, the figure of Arrowsmith has not found any unanimous acceptance in society.

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THE other well-known attempt to solve the problem, *Dodsworth*, is closer to *Babbitt*. Less obvious, more intelligent and sensitive, "the apotheosis of common sense" as Lewis calls him, *Dodsworth* is a rich, middle-aged industrialist married to a glamorous woman, with whom he cannot continue to live and whom he seeks to replace with an ideal which he hopes Europe will provide. Europe fails him. For the first time it is love which completely occupies the center of the novel, the love of a plain, romantic Puritan for a spoiled, third-rate copy of *Emma Bovary*. After having been denied access to any worthwhile representatives of European culture, and obliged to frequent one group of phonies after another, *Dodsworth* finally divorces his wife and begins life anew with a once married American woman living in Italy who has in some way acquired an earthy Italian wisdom. Arrowsmith found his salvation in science, but *Dodsworth* does not with culture. Once more the solution is that of George *Babbitt*, the person; with *Dodsworth*, like *Babbitt*, saved by woman—more subtle, but still woman. For *Babbitt*, his wife is bread. For *Dodsworth*, his second wife is something more exotic, yet together with her he continues to seek out his salvation, this time hoping to create a new industrial empire, a housing project, the latest embodiment of modern architectural ideas.

There is a touching naiveté in his belief, so common, that once slums are abolished most of the evils which men perpetrate will end. One wonders what *Dodsworth* thought of the many clean, spacious, low-priced apartments which the Fascists constructed, since they went to great pains to abolish slums. We are not told how successful *Dodsworth's* building plans are. Thus *Dodsworth's* impasse, which neither exile nor humanitarian dreams can solve, is solved by woman. What was once a personal solution for a character, in which he abandoned all moral quests, has become now the solution for an entire moral universe.

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HOW significant it is, then, that Sinclair Lewis' hero in his last novel, *World So Wide*, is an architect, a successful architect of New Life, Colorado. Hayden Chart, thirty-five, married, childless. Surviving an auto accident in which his wife is killed, he escapes to Europe to forget a sense of guilt for his wife's death, and to find something to live for, since he can no longer endure the *Babbitts* in New Life. Again the romantic Puritan. In Florence he falls in love with a high priestess of estheticism, who lives only for the Middle Ages and completely disdains the vulgar present. He is almost married to her but is saved in time by Roxanne Eldritch, home-town journalist friend, also traveling in Europe,

who convinces him of the phoniness of the high priestess and of all those who surround him.

As the plot suggests, this is not a great novel, and it is more interesting as the culmination of a trend of thought than as a picture of exiles in Italy. It is quite badly written, and in some places so similar to a soap-opera script that, as a friend of this writer remarked, Sinclair Lewis is the only man in America who can write as if Sinclair Lewis had never written. But Lewis has played two very interesting variations on hackneyed themes. At the end of the novel he brings together two phonies: one, the high priestess of estheticism, who wishes to preserve knowledge in its immaculate purity; the other, a cultural racketeer of the type which lectures on philosophy in the Rose Bowl.

The other variation is on the heroine, Roxanne. She is the typical clever, healthy American girl who calls a thing by its right name, and convincingly shows the hero that he could recognize pretense only in its most obvious dress. She makes perfectly clear that *Babbitt*, with his pitiful lack of taste and breeding, but with a center and with some drive, is infinitely preferable to a cheap estheticism. Better to act stupidly than to rot in a cultivated fashion. The end of the novel finds the two, newly married, on their way to other places, India and the Far East. This time, however, the hero knows that he too will send postcards to the folks back home, buy sweaters for relatives, and take a lot of snapshots.

The problem of *Babbitt* has come to a dead end. Exile is no answer. Art is no answer. Culture is a racket. Only this much is clear: there are certain traits of *Babbitt* which are good. Out of all that messy heritage there are elements which can still be utilized and they must be used. For there is nothing outside of that spotty bourgeois heritage but sham and corruption. The setting is very much like *Babbitt*. The hero and heroine are quite obviously descendants of *Babbitt*. How proper it is, then, that the revolt against *Babbitt* should end in Florence, the birthplace of the bourgeoisie and the cultural center of a very, very bourgeois country.

★

THERE are, of course, a number of people who can share neither Lewis' confidence in a freckled newspaperwoman, a gum-chewing version of D. H. Lawrence's woman, nor his confidence in this more glossy type of *Babbitt*. Some Europeans, for example—those who are not as "healthy" as the new *Babbitts*. Perhaps there are more people tired of such ideas than is suspected. Perhaps enough to make a renewed popularity of Lewis quite impossible. But even if they are few, the sons of *Babbitt* will take the cue, and whereas before they would never have been caught with a copy of *Reader's Digest*, now they will not be caught with the crude novels of Sinclair Lewis.

Sinclair Lewis would, of course, snort at these endless complications. As his hero says somewhere in the last novel, speaking of a moment of great exaltation, "Sitting in San Miniato, looking at the altar-screen, I caught myself humming *Casey Jones*."

Books

Strait and Narrow. Geoffrey Cotterell. Lippincott. \$3.50.

IF A reviewer fails to mention John Marquand in discussing *Strait and Narrow*, he should promptly be stripped of his bars and relegated to obscure Azerbaijanian poetry. For this book, the fourth by the young British novelist but the first to cross the Atlantic, is undeniably in the tradition of *Point of No Return*. It is a story of the moderately successful, the devotees of "getting ahead," and it is written with that mixture of sympathy and diagnostic incisiveness that encourages the reader to take a long, cold look, if not at himself, at least at the people around him.

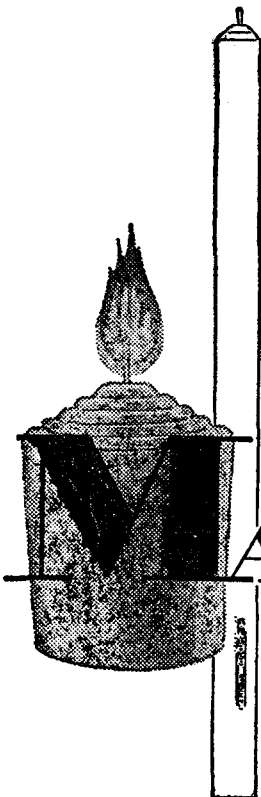
Mr. Cotterell's style is not as effortlessly smooth as Mr. Marquand's; it has a dense and lumpy consistency. But the cumulative im-

pact is powerful. Mr. Cotterell has constructed his story with skill, and the plot is well-paced and engrossing. The characters have substance; more than that, they give the impression of being significant human beings. With restrained irony the author probes into their lives, but even when they stand revealed as shoddy or prosaic or pathetic, they retain a certain human dignity.

Not limited by a preoccupation with country-club standards of social acceptability and the struggles of the not-quite-in's to get the other foot through the door, Mr. Cotterell explores a wide segment of English society. There is the socialist student of the thirties, busy with protest meetings and marches, who is reluctant to graduate out of the security of college radicalism; the middle-class liberal family arguing contentedly over all the current "problem"

pamphlets; the newly-rich manufacturer who spouts bombastically about patriotism while breaking the export restrictions.

But primarily this is the story of Richard Tarrant, a likable young barrister, out for money and prestige and a political career. Clever if not brilliant, he recognized an opportunity even before it knocked. He was doing poorly at law school and beginning to doubt his dreams of success when he managed to meet Blanche, the cousin of his favorite lecturer. She introduced him into the elite society of the campus, and pushed him into the forefront of collegiate organizations. In the army he rose from enlisted man to major by knowing the right people, saying the right things, and always appearing interested in whatever caught the fancy of his commanding officer—whether it was colored signs outside the cookhouse or a new style in kit lay-outs. The girl he married happened to be the daughter of a wealthy industrialist who could throw a lot of legal business his way.



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For one brief period Richard found a respite from his restless ambition. When his plane was shot down over occupied Europe, he was sheltered by a Dutch couple. In the months of his convalescence, he came to know contentment through his friendship for Eduard and his love for Annetje. For the first time he could be himself without any pretenses.

Perhaps it was inevitable that the success-ridden Englishman could never recapture the serenity of those months in the old farmhouse. But the author resorts to a final twist of fate to snatch away the seemingly possible happy ending. The irony of fate may surpass all wonder, but for a novel of such integrity, this neat manipulation of coincidence seems a cheap way out.

Nevertheless, *Strait and Narrow* is an important book. Mr. Cotterell is a perceptive commentator, with all of John Marquand's awareness of shifting standards, and perhaps a deeper insight into the rickety system of values that governs so much of contemporary life. He has, too, a warm understanding of the people who struggle to live by these values. But above all, he is a teller of good tales, and his book is more than effective social analysis—it is a tight-knit and absorbing story.

CAROL H. WEISS.

His Eye Is On The Sparrow. Ethel Waters (with Charles Samuels). Doubleday. \$3.

I REMEMBER once having read of a painter (I forget now his name) who had a diabolical genius for exposing on canvas the souls of his sitters. A portrait, when finished, would be an excellent likeness quite satisfying to the customer. But everyone else could see all the client's human weaknesses laid bare: the pride, or greediness, or sensuality, as the case might be.

Charles Samuels, who has collaborated with Ethel Waters on her autobiography, *His Eye Is On The Sparrow*, has achieved something of the same effect. He has let Miss Waters tell her story in her own

words, without comment or elaboration. The book reads as though it were transcribed verbatim from a tape-recorder, a lively monologue by a person who likes to talk about herself—and does so with gusto.

How far Mr. Samuels' own talents were involved in the book, beyond punctuation and arrangement, it is hard to detect. But if there was editing, if there were excisions or elaborations, it was done in masterful style. Miss Waters, it may be presumed, gave approval to the finished product. Yet it is doubtful whether she herself realized the cold realism with which her total personality has been limned.

There is her closeness with a dollar, evidenced by her charities so carefully mentioned, yet so pitifully few. Evidenced too as she tells magnanimously how she continued to pay her accompanist's salary of \$75 a week while that faithful soul was in the hospital having a tumor removed. (Ethel herself was making \$3,500 a week at the time). Evidenced in a dozen little incidents which Ethel relates quite guilelessly.

There is her intense jealousy of the affections of the man she loved and kept. It is a jealousy that ranges from primitive passion, as when she beats up her boy friend's side-line girls, to a childish petulance, as when she makes Eddie get out of her car and ride in the bus, because the worshipful girls thought that the car was Eddie's.

There is her child-like love of show. She does not merely travel by car, but, "I traveled in my Lincoln . . . my Lincoln . . . my Lincoln." There is her equally child-like snob-bishness, which finds distaste in playing the "Colored" theaters after having become accustomed to the "white."

Miss Waters' resentment against race prejudice is wholly personal. She delights in telling how she put in their place the haughty dowagers who crowded around her after the ship's concert, but who had had no time nor word for her when she was just a colored girl, incognito. Her annoyance at segregation seems to be aroused only when it affects herself. She exhibits no social conscious-

ness, no sense of the cancerous injustice involved. Probably because her own life began, and her childhood was lived, at the very bottom of the social structure. At the foot of the ladder, no one can look down upon another, so whites and Negroes lived amicably together.

And right there is the whole unpointed point of the book, its undirected message. Merely as a talented and successful entertainer, even as an able actress, Miss Waters is hardly important enough to merit more than a passing glance as the subject of an autobiography. But when the story's ending is contrasted with the tale's beginning, the saga-like proportions of her career emerge. It is then that the frailties which her collaborator (through sly malice or genius) has allowed to show, like a soiled and sagging slip, assume their true perspective.

The question is not whether Miss Waters is a great woman, in the absolute sense. The wonder is that she has fought so hard and conquered so well against the by-product that our materialistic culture produces so inevitably, but will not acknowledge—the kind of poverty that is the boneyard of hope and the abortionist of ideals.

Born a bastard, raised in a red-light district, the errand-girl of whores and pimps, schooled in thievery, married at fourteen and divorced within the year, hungering for love and cut off from the kind of people who could give it, almost crippled by neglect in a segregated hospital ward—to Miss Waters, if ever I meet her on the street, I shall doff my hat and bow. I shall bow humbly, as one who has done little with much *should* bow to one who has done so much with so little.

LEO J. TRESE.

Japanese Prints of the Ledoux Collection. Part IV. Sharaku to Toyokuni. Louis V. Ledoux. Princeton University Press. \$25.

PUBLICATION of the late Louis V. Ledoux's catalogue of his outstanding collection of Japanese

color prints has been, with this fourth volume, shifted from E. Weyhe to the Princeton University Press. Dissatisfied with the quality of the first contract printing, the Press recalled the volume. The reprinted volume is a splendid companion to its predecessors.

The present issue catalogues the later figure painters: notably Sharaku, Chōki, Shunyei, Eishi, and Toyokuni I. All of these worked during the very late eighteenth and the nineteenth century, during the last third of which the Japanese color print became coarsened into tourist-bait. The final volume will be devoted to the landscape-and city-painters. Hokusai and Hiroshige, who are perhaps the best known in the West.

As I mentioned in a review of the previous volume in this series, Mr. Ledoux limited his collection to 250 prints. As his thirty-year study of Japanese prints progressed, he disposed of good prints for better, inferior impressions for superior. His collection is considered the best in this country, and probably the best in the

western hemisphere. It was his feeling that "he was merely the custodian for time of works of art, both perishable and lovely." And so he inaugurated this five-volume catalogue, insisting on the closest reproduction, so that his collection would become permanently available to others. Because of the cost of the meticulous reproduction, the books are too expensive for normal private purchase; and even so had to be heavily underwritten (Jean Ledoux, in a supplementary introduction, mentions that publication of this Part was made possible through the sale of manuscripts willed to the family by Edwin Arlington Robinson); but they will, presumably, be available in public libraries and museums.

Of the 61 plates—16 in full color, 45 in halftone—21 are given over to Sharaku's strong, expressive, often grotesque or sardonic portraits of actors. The artistic production of Sharaku was unique. A Nō actor-dancer in the service of great feudal families, he became in maturity interested in the popular theatre. His

entire surviving work of 138 prints was produced within ten months of 1794. His adopted signature itself is a fancy: its translation is "one who likes to draw as he sees."

Chōki, who worked between about 1789-1795, chose different subjects and portrayed them in a softer mood and manner. His portraits are of women—sometimes ladies, more often "ladies of pleasure." Mr. Ledoux remarks that "the great prints signed Chōki have an ethereal quality about them—a grace, a delicacy of feeling, a distinctive coloring—that is difficult to define or describe but is as unmistakable as it is exquisite."

Of the other artists represented, Mr. Ledoux gives most space to Shunyei (1762-1819; chiefly known as a designer of actor prints); Eishi (1756-1829; one of the few Ukiyoe artists of Samurai rank, and one of the few to depict subjects of aristocratic rank; about 1799 he gave up designing prints and devoted the remaining thirty years of his life to the more respected occupation of painting); and Utagawa Toyokuni (1769-

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No. 1—Fall 1950, still available to those subscribing now, contains articles by EMMANUEL MOUNIER, EMIL BRUNNER, GABRIEL MARCEL, NICOLAS BERDYAEV, FRANZ JOSEF SCHOENINGH, and HENRI DE LUBAC, and Notes on other Publications.

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1825) whom he considers "the last great artist of the figure prints," but who also "hastened and survived the death of the art. In his later years, yielding to an enormous demand, he produced a great number of designs which were mediocre in themselves and were printed, because of the declining taste of the times, in crude colors. After his death came the deluge of imitators and pupils and adopters of his name, whose generally uninspired and uninteresting works are supposed by the uninitiated to represent the color-prints of Japan." DAVID BURNHAM.

The Early Days of Maryknoll. Raymond A. Lane. David McKay. \$3.

IT is less than forty years since Father Price, a missionary in North Carolina, and Father James Anthony Walsh of Boston founded the Catholic Foreign Missionary Society of America, or Maryknoll. One year later the author of this volume arrived in Ossining, New York, as a seminarian. Bishop Lane is the third Superior General of this Amer-

ican congregation which now numbers 2,500 men and women dedicated to the task of bringing the Gospel to the neglected peoples of Africa, South America and the Far East.

His account of the first ten years is highly informal and personal. It is marked by a love of fun, communal sense of adventure, a good deal of mutual regard and the consciousness of a great mission. One of the early triumphs was the founding on a shoestring of the monthly, *Field Afar*. Perhaps this volume will be treasured more than anything else for the sidelights it throws on the personalities of the two founders.

The High Romance. Michael Williams. Macmillan. \$3.

THE autobiography of the founding editor of THE COMMONWEAL is now reissued some five months after his death, after being out of print for several years. It is the colorful and impassioned story of his early life and his adventures as a newspaperman in various parts of

this country. It tells of a career marked by struggle, both for success as a writer and to overcome ill health. *The High Romance* comes to a climax in Mr. Williams' return to the Catholic Faith and the part which Thérèse of Lisieux had in his conversion. The fourteenth printing incorporates new material added by Mr. Williams shortly before his death.

• REVIEWERS •

CAROL H. WEISS is associated with the national headquarters of the Girl Scouts of America.

REV. LEO J. TRESE, a priest of the archdiocese of Detroit, is the author of *Vessel of Clay*.

DAVID BURNHAM is a former drama critic of THE COMMONWEAL. He is the author of several novels, among them *Winter in the Sun* and *Last Act in Bermuda*.



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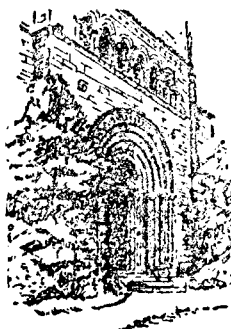
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A Point of View III

To Believe in Freedom

LET him who is without moral carelessness among us throw the first stone at the liberals. Who can deny that every weakness we might point out in the liberal mentality is also present in the Catholic mentality? We too have our myopia, and our blinders, and our slogans, and our intellectual fashions, and our confusion of political with moral issues, and our moral lapses. Who can afford to feel self-righteous? Who can afford to feel superior?

There is, however, one difficulty that must be cleared up before we can establish any kind of trust or confidence between us. And that is the liberal habit of assuming that when a Catholic is liberal (in the American sense) it is not because of his Catholicism, but rather in spite of it. The fact is that any Catholic who really believes and practices the teachings of His Church must—of necessity and by definition—be a liberal in the sense of being concerned about justice between classes and between races and between nations.

The liberal will never understand or trust his Catholic counterparts unless he understands, too, that most of them are devoted to the promotion of civil rights and to the concepts of political and, yes, religious freedom, not because they are in revolt against their Church, but because they believe that those teachings demand that men should be as free as possible from restraint and coercion. For we must remember that it is the Church that teaches man is free, and must remain so, and that he is not compelled even by God Himself.

JOHN C. CORT in *The Commonweal*, June 16, 1950.

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